

## Six Months as a Continental Soldier

*Surviving and thriving during the winter of 1777-78*



The March to Valley Forge  
*William T. Trego, 1883*  
*Courtesy of The American Revolution Center*

### **Developed by:**

Cameron Hopkins, Teacher-Ranger-Teacher  
Valley Forge National Historical Park  
Tredyffrin-Easttown School District  
Wayne, PA.  
August 2012

## Curriculum Unit Objective

*Students will evaluate and understand the winter encampment site at Valley Forge (1777-78) by taking part in the life of a member of the Continental Army as it marched into Valley Forge, was challenged by multiple elements, and then potentially exited to continue the war for independence against the British.*

---

## Best Practices Incorporated

Reading and Writing in the Content Area  
Analysis of Primary Documents/Artifacts  
Analysis of Secondary Sources  
Map Skills  
Heterogeneous Student Grouping  
Creative Problem Solving  
Historical Research Skills  
Media/Digital/Internet Technology Skills  
Presentation Skills  
Extension Activities

## How does this unit work?

The objective of the curriculum unit is for students to engage the history of the Continental Army's encampment at Valley Forge through active historical learning. While the curriculum material is designed with a middle school level focus (grades 5-8), educators may adapt it to suit the needs of elementary or high school learners.

The suggested course of operation for this unit encourages the use of all seven learning modules. Educators can certainly assess their students' needs and time parameters such that some modules may be excluded.

The basic concept behind this unit is to place students within the historical context of the Valley Forge encampment during the winter of 1777-78 and move them through each learning module in order to assess the ability of a continental soldier "to survive and thrive" in that environment. As a result, it is suggested that students be placed in small, heterogeneous groups which can then move as independent entities through the learning modules. The students within a group will individually complete the "Survival Rubric" with each learning module to determine, at the completion of the curriculum, how successfully he/she has "survived and thrived" by virtue of their individual "survival score."

## **Learning modules**

*From the march in to Valley Forge to the march out -- Where does your story begin as a member of the Continental Army? How does your story end?*

### **LM 1: The March In**

Why did General George Washington choose Valley Forge as the site for the Army's winter encampment? This module focuses on examining the choices made by the leader of the Continental Army as he determined where to place his army in 1777.

### **LM 2: Washington's Orders**

Build those huts...this module focuses on exploring what may have been one of the most important orders given by General Washington during the winter encampment.

### **LM 3: Breakfast...Lunch...Dinner?**

The men have to eat...but how and what? This module focuses on introducing students to the hardships of the encampment, specifically related to the daily food needs of the soldiers.

### **LM 4: Keeping the Doctor Away**

Approximately 2,000 men perished from disease and health-related issues during the winter of 1777-78. This module focuses on examining the critical issue of a soldier's health during the six month encampment.

### **LM 5: The Daily Routine**

If the Continental soldiers were confined to Valley Forge for several months in the heart of the cold winter, what exactly did they do every day? This module focuses on the introducing students to the daily life of the Continental soldiers while they were encamped at Valley Forge.

### **LM 6: Successful "Sogering."**

General von Steuben was the man in charge of turning Washington's Army into a more highly trained fighting force, but how did this all happen? This module focuses on taking students through the basic steps toward becoming a "professional" soldier in 1777. The term "sogering" comes from Private Joseph Plumb Martin's memoirs when he referred to "soldiering", or being a soldier.

### **LM 7: The March Out**

The summer of 1778 was a joyous time for the army as it left the confines of Valley Forge, but what happened from here? This module focuses on showing students that the war for independence did not end at Valley Forge, but instead, continued for several more years...the question: if you survived Valley Forge what happened after?

# Learning modules

## Standards Alignment

### LM 1: The March In

*Pennsylvania State Standards: 8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development*

**8.1.6. A:** Explain continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

**8.1.6. B:** Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.

**8.1.7. A:** Demonstrate continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

**8.1.7. B:** Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.

**8.1.8. A:** Compare and contrast events over time and how continuity and change over time influenced those events.

**8.1.8. B:** Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

*Common Core State Standards*

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source;

**WHST.6-8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

### LM 2: Washington's Orders

*Pennsylvania State Standards: 8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development*

**8.1.6. B:** Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.

**8.1.7. B:** Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.

**8.1.8. B:** Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

*Common Core State Standards*

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source;

**WHST.6-8.2b:** Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### LM 3: Breakfast...Lunch...Dinner?

*Pennsylvania State Standards: 8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development*

**8.1.6. B:** Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.

**8.1.7. B:** Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.

**8.1.8. B:** Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

*Common Core State Standards*

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source;

**RH.6-8.3:** Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies;

**WHST.6-8.2a-f:** Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**WHST.6-8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

## **LM 4: Keeping the Doctor Away**

*Pennsylvania State Standards: 8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development*

**8.1.6. B:** Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.

**8.1.7. B:** Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.

**8.1.8. B:** Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

*Common Core Standards:*

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source;

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**WHST.6-8.9** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

## **LM 5: The Daily Routine**

*Pennsylvania State Standards: 8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development*

**8.1.6. A:** Explain continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

**8.1.7. A:** Demonstrate continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

**8.1.8. A:** Compare and contrast events over time and how continuity and change over time influenced those events.

*Common Core Standards*

**RH.6-8.3:** Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies;

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**WHST.6-8.9** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

## **LM 6: Successful “Sogering” or soldiering**

*Pennsylvania State Standards:*

*8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development; 8.3: United States History.*

**8.1.6. B:** Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.

**8.3.6. A:** Explain the social, political, cultural, and economic contributions of individuals and groups to United States history.

**8.1.7. B:** Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.

**8.3.7. A:** Classify the social, political, cultural, and economic contributions of individuals and groups throughout United States history.

**8.1.8. B:** Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

**8.3.8. A:** Examine the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the United States.

#### *Common Core Standards*

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source

**RH.6-8.7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**WHST.6-8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

## **LM 7: The March Out**

### *Pennsylvania State Standards: 8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development*

**8.1.6. A:** Explain continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

**8.1.6. C:** Identify a thesis statement using appropriate primary and secondary sources.

**8.1.7. A:** Demonstrate continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

**8.1.7. C:** Form a thesis statement on an assigned topic using appropriate primary and secondary sources.

**8.1.8. A:** Compare and contrast events over time and how continuity and change over time influenced those events.

**8.1.8. C:** Produce an organized product on an assigned historical topic that presents and reflects on a thesis statement and appropriate primary and secondary sources.

#### *Common Core Standards:*

**RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source;

**WHST.6-8.1a-f:** Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

**WHST.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**WHST.6-8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

## **Resource Links**

Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards Aligned System

<http://pdesas.org/Standard/Views>

Common Core State Standards Initiative

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

## Historical Context

The Continental Army, under the leadership of General George Washington, was commanded to spend the winter of 1777-78 in southeastern Pennsylvania, approximately 20 miles outside the capital city of Philadelphia. The Continental Congress authorized this encampment in the summer of 1777 and prepared it by storing vast amounts of supplies in the area. Washington marched his army there after the British, under General William Howe, occupied Philadelphia- having dealt Washington's army a destructive blow at the Battle of Brandywine.

Prior to the 1777 encampment, the site known as Valley Forge had been a fully operational iron forge owned and run by the Potts and Dewees families. This forge and other manufacturing mills were destroyed by British troops prior to the Continental Army's occupation. (Daniel A. Graham, *Isaac Potts and the Valley Forge- Washington at Prayer Legend*. 9/2000)

## Survival Rubric

Name of Continental Soldier: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions-** For each Learning module students will complete the exercises assigned and then award themselves “Survival Points” within this rubric as a measure of assessing two elements:

- The strength of their academic work in each assigned exercise.
- Their ability to “survive” the long winter months at Valley Forge from march in to march out.

*Note- Students must take ownership and responsibility for their self-assessment as they complete each exercise. Survival at Valley Forge was not easy...! In order to successfully survive the encampment of 1777-78, a student will need to accumulate a total of 40 Survival Points.*

	1 Survival Point	2 Survival Points	3 Survival Points	4 Survival Points	5 Survival Points
LM #1					
LM #2					
LM #3					
LM #4					
LM #5					
LM #6					
LM #7					
Total Points					